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Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

26 November 1985

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Executive Director

NOTE FOR: DCI

SUBJECT : Oversight Paper

Bill:

If I had more time to polish this, I think it would be more persuasive. But since the topic of oversight is on your mind, I am going to send it along anyway. It makes the basic point that one aspect of our effort to establish a more workable arrangement with the Congress ought to be some serious emphasis on getting them to understand, over the longer term, more about the world of intelligence.



DCI
EXEC
REG

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26 November 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

VIA : DDCI

FROM : EXDIR

SUBJECT : More On Oversight

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1. The last sentence of your recent letter to Senator Durenberger notes that you have thoughts on improving the oversight process which you would like to discuss with the Committee. While the general topic is on our minds, I would like to add an idea we've discussed many times but have done little about--namely, doing something of a "longer term" nature to improve the situation on Capitol Hill. [redacted] lamenting Congressional lack of understanding of us and our mission, made a similar point in his recent memo to you.

2. There will always be day-to-day frictions and policy differences which work to exacerbate relations between ourselves and our oversight committees. However, we focus so totally on the short-term fire fighting that these issues require that we invest very little in building a longer term base of support, which might ultimately help us deal with short-term problems. After wrestling with "how to live with oversight" for more than a decade, and throwing many talented people at it, it seems to me we have made less progress toward achieving a business-like, professional working relationship than many of us had hoped would be the case.

3. Much of this problem, of course, goes with the territory. But there are initiatives we might take to try to improve our situation. What should we be trying to do? I suggest that, first, we need a more consistent, longer term, strategy for dealing with the Congress. Second, such a strategy should be focused on the relatively thoughtful, middle-of-the-road people who exist in our four oversight committees on both sides of the aisle. Finally, the strategy should help us try to:

- create in these people a good understanding of what our intelligence professionals are like;
- help them feel how costly it is to us (and to our country) to see so much about sources and methods, about our profession, in the media;
- help them to feel their responsibilities to all of our people as members of our "board of directors"; and
- encourage them to understand the need for reliance on sensible, mature, problem-solving staff people; discouraging use of issue-oriented, "new to Washington" people concerned with advancing their careers.

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4. Here are some specific thoughts about how to structure a program which might further these goals. Start by identifying the 6-12 individuals in the House and Senate who have the basic characteristics above, with particular attention to those who will be around for a while.

5. Then develop a small package of visits, briefings, and speaking engagements specifically designed to emphasize our objectives. Keep the program under constant informal review. Keep it focused on the points we wish to convey, to maintain a business-like but informal style and to ensure participation by people inside the Agency who are senior enough to be able to convey the big picture. And make sure it gets done on some consistent, scheduled basis.

6. The visit program should include several different kinds of experiences--it might begin with a two-day tour of a station, perhaps accompanied by the DDO himself or a Division Chief, expressly designed to provide a rapid but total immersion in field operations. Pick someplace where the locals are unfriendly, where there are important "live" operations, where tradecraft is important--a place that shows us using our skills because we have to. OTS' capabilities might be the subject of a second visit. A satellite ground site could be a third visit.

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25X1 [redacted] a counterterrorism demonstration program, coupled with substantive dicusssion of the thrust of our program, might be a fourth. Emphasize exposure to live problems and live issues, let Members see a good cross section of our people, and leave room for lots of informal give and take, especially at night and in social meetings.

7. A briefing program might be put together to advance the same general goals. Some of it might even be done by videotape, but only as a "stand-in" for the real thing. One presentation might focus on the great lengths to which we go to ensure a competent career work force. (The problem, of course, is how to dramatize the great care we take, in selection, in how and why we use the polygraph, and in how our personnel review process works. I suggest lots of exposure to real individual employees, as opposed to stiff, formal, briefing-like presentations.) Other presentations might be focused on how a particular piece of analysis was produced, or on how a certain capability was created. Or we might do something designed to explain our ten or so most impressive achievements, to include a wide range of events covering the last 20-30 years.

8. Again, the point would be to explain and illustrate some of the processes and techniques we employ to show the care, attention to details, and integrity built into the way we do our work. To avoid producing work which sounds like propaganda, include some discussion of failures, flaps, and misjudgments as well.

9. The third part of this proposal would involve designing a more structured effort to expose members to us and our people by putting them to work more often in our training programs. Some believe that we change more minds by inviting people to explain their views to us than we even do by talking to them. Expand the use of this approach, extending it beyond its current application into component management conferences within CIA or anywhere else appropriate.

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